Arrogance, Iman and Jannah

Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) was asked:
Regarding his statement,

"The one who possesses an iota of Kibr in his (spiritual) heart (intention, consciousness) shall not enter al-Jannah"

Is this hadîth specific only to the believers (Mu'minîn) or (is it specific only to the) unbelievers (Kufâr)? If we were to say that it is specific for the Believers then (is not) our statement trivial considering (the fact that) the believers shall enter al-Jannah (Paradise) due to their Imân . If, on the other hand, we were to say that the hadîth is specific for the unbelievers then what is the relevance of the statement (since it is already known that the unbelievers shall not gain admission to al-Jannah)?

He (rahimahullah) answered: (Another) authentically reported wording of (this particular version of the) Hadîth is,

"The one who possesses half of mustard seed of Kibr in his heart shall not be granted admission to Jannah; and the one who possesses half of a mustard seed of Imân shall not enter the (Eternal) Fire." [1]

Kibr that openly opposes and negates Imân results in the banishment of its possessor from entering al-Jannah as is found in His (Allâh, the Most High) statement:

"And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islâmic Monotheism)] (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn (Yastakbirûn – Have Kibr) My worship [i.e. do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness, (Islâmic Monotheism)] they will surely enter Hell in humiliation!" Ghâfir 40:60

This is the Kibr of Iblîs (the Devil), Pharaoh and all the others who possessed Kibr that invalidated Imân . This is also the Kibr that the Jews possess and those whom Allâh has described to us by saying:

"Is it that whenever there came to you a Messenger with what you yourselves desired not, you grew arrogant? Some, you disbelieved and some, you killed." Al-Baqarah 2: 87

Al-Kibr, in its entirety, openly opposes the essentials of al-Imân. As such he who has an iota of Kibr in his heart shall not act upon that which Allâh has prescribed, nor shall he abstain from that which Allâh has prohibited. Instead his Kibr shall result in his disavowal and rejection of the Haqq (Truth) and instill in him contempt of others. This, precisely, is the explanatory definition of al-Kibr provide by an-Nabi as is found in the complete version of the initial Hadîth

"The one who possesses an iota of Kibr in his heart shall not be granted admission to Jannah."

He was (then asked), "[But] O Messenger of Allâh ! A man likes to have fine clothing and footwear. Is this included in Kibr?" He responded,

"No. Allâh is Beauty and loves Beauty. Kibr is the rejection of Truth (Battrul-Haqq) and condescension of others (wâ 'ghâmttun-Nâs)."[2]

The statement Battarul-Haqq denotes distain and rejection of the Truth, while wâ ghâmttun-nâs implies contempt and condescension of others from amongst mankind.

Therefore the one who possesses half of a mustard seed of it (Kibr) rejects the Truth that he was ordered to accept and act upon. At the same time, the Kibr instills in him a sense of condescension that inculcates in the individual an oppressive demeanor producing transgression over the rights of others.

The one who neglects his obligations (due to his rejection of them) and is oppressive to others from amongst the creation is not to be amongst the people of Jannah (while in this state), or deserving of it. On the contrary, such an individual is to be counted amongst the people who are threatened with punishment (Ahlul Wâ'îd)!

His statement, "The one who possesses an iota of Kibr in his heart shall not be granted admission to Jannah," implies that the individual is not from its (Jannah) people and is not deserving of it. But if he repents, or he possesses Hasânât (righteous deeds) that expiate his sins, or Allâh has given him Ibtillâh (trials and tests) in the form of calamities that have expunged his sins, or similar things; then for that individual the recompense of Kibr – which originally was a barrier for him to enter Jannah – is eliminated and he gains admission (to the Jannah). Similarly Allâh, due to Divine Grace, may forgive the individual (the sin of) Kibr.[3] None shall gain admission (to Paradise) while possessing an iota of Kibr. As a result, those (scholars) discussing this Hadîth, and other Hadîth that have a similar theme, have stated:

"Unconditional admission (to the Jannah) – that is not in conjunction with punishment (for the sin of Kibr) – is what is being negated in this Hadîth; not the admission to Jannah that is granted to those who enter the Fire (to be purified and cleansed) and then are allowed admission toParadise thereafter. (On the other hand) if a Hadîth explicitly declares that a particular person is in Jannah or that a particular person is from the People of Jannah, it would then be understood that he would enter the Jannah and not enter the fire (beforehand)."

After this clarification we come to understand the true meaning of these narrations as being that the one who possesses an iota of Kibr in his heart is not from the people of Paradise (up to that point) and shall not gain admission into it without punishment (for his sin). Surely he deserves punishment – due to the enormity of the sin – similar to those who perform the Major (Kabâ'ir) sins. Allâh

may punish him in the Fire as long as He wishes, but none from amongst the people of Tawhîd shall remain in the Fire eternally.

This is to be the way we understand all the Hadîth that have a similar meaning. This understanding is to be used when seeking the meaning of his statement:

"The one who severs the ties of the womb shall not enter Jannah". [4]

Or,

"You shall not enter Jannah until you believe. And you shall not believe until you love one another. Shall I inform you of something that if you do you shall (truly) love each other? Spread the greetings of Salâm amongst yourselves."

This is the understanding that we are to have when pondering over the Hadîth that contain Wâ'îd – Threat of Punishment. In this way we understand that the hadîth is general and can be attributed to both the Kufâr (unbelievers) and Muslims.

If one was to say, "All the Muslims enter Jannah due to their Islâm." The response is that not all Muslims enter Jannah without punishment. Surely the people who have been Threatened (with punishment in the Hereafter due to their sins) shall enter into the Fire to remain in it for the period that Allâh so wills even though they are not Kufâr. The individual who has some Imân coinciding with major sins may enter into the Fire and exit from it as a result of the Shafâ'ah (Intercession – permission from Allâh to intercede) of an-Nabi or by other reported means as he has articulated. He said:

"My Shafâ'ah is for (shall benefit) the people of the Majors Sins (who did not commit Shirk) from amongst my Ummah."[5]

And he said as is reported in the Sahîh:

"I shall bring out of the Fire the one who possesses half of a mustard seed of Imân ."[6]

In this way we understand what is in store for those whom Allâh has threatened with punishment – the murderer, fornicator/adulterer, the one who consumes intoxicants, and the one who misappropriates the wealth of the orphans, the one who witnesses falsehood and others who perform the deeds of the people of major sins. They – even if they are not unbelievers – are not deserving of the Jannah that they are promised (as Muslims) without first being (cleansed and purged through) punishment.

The Madh-hab (way and belief) of Ahlis-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah is that the Fûsâq (deviant sinners) from amongst the general body of Muslims are not going to be eternally punished in the Fire as has been stated by al-Khawârij [7] and al-Mu'tazilâh. [8]They are not complete in their religion (Dîn), Imân and obedience to Allâh[9]] They have Hasanât wa Sayyi'ât (good and bad deeds) that necessitate a measure of punishment and reward. This is a concise dissertation regarding the issue.

Wa Allâhu a‘lâm

--

[1] Translator: Reported by Imâm Muslim, Abu Dawûd, At-Tirmithi on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ûd. See Islâh al-Masajid for Shaykh al-Albani rahimâhullah.
[2] Translator: Reported by Imam Muslim (54), Ibn Khuzaymah, Abu Dawûd, At-Tirmithi, Ibn Sa‘d on the authority of Ibn Mas‘ûd. At-Tabrani reports it on the authority of ‘Abdullah bin Salâm

[3] Translator: Allâh the Most High says in Surat an-Nisâ’ (4:48):

“Verily, Allâh forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases, and whoever sets up partners with Allâh in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin..”

[4] Translator: Reported by al-Imam Muslim (1765 – Mukhtasar) al-Hâkim, al-Bayhaqi, Abu Dawûd, and at-Tirmithi on the authority of Jubâyr bin Mut‘âm.

[5] Translator: Turn to the Chapter of “Shafâ‘ah for the People of Major Sins” (Pg. 61-108) in the highly beneficial book of the world-renowned Muhadith ash-Shaykh Muqbil bin Hâdî al-Wâdi‘î (rahimahullah) titled, “Ash-Shafâ‘ah.” In the chapter the Shaykh reports seventy-six (76) hadîth showing that those who perform Major sins are not excluded from the Shafâ‘ah of Rasûl ul Allâh . This particular hadîth can be found in the book on page 85 – Hadîth number 56. Sh. Abi ‘Abdir-Rahmân Muqbil bin Hâdî reports that the Hadîth is collected by at-Tirmithi (Vol. 4, Pg. 45) on the authority of Anas and Jâbir. He then states: “And this Hadîth is Hasan Sahîh Gharîb (Good and Authentic yet Scarce in this mode). The Hadîth is reported by Ibn Khuzaymah (Pg. 270), Ibn Hibban as is in the Mawrid (Pg. 640), and al-Hâkim (Vol. 1, Pg. 69) said – This Hadîth is Authentic and meets the requirements set by Bukhari and Muslim even though they did not narrate it.” Later on the Shaykh rahimâhullah says, “al-Hâfidh Ibn Kathîr said in his Tafsîr (Vol. 1, Page 487) that its chain of Narration is Sahîh and meets the requirements set by Bukhari and Muslim.” The Shaykh then takes us step by step through the Chain of narration and proves convincingly that the hadîth does not meet the requirements of Bukhari and Muslim due to the presence of Mu‘âmar reporting from Thâbit. For further detailed analysis turn to Pg. 85-88. In Shaykh al-Albâni’s Sahîh al-Jâmi‘ he declares the Hadîth Sahîh on the authority of Jâbir, Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar, Ka‘b bin ‘Ajrah and Anas.

[6] Translator: This is a segment of the famous Hadîth of Shafâ‘ah collected by Bukhari (Vol. 13, Pg. 472).

[7] Translator: Khawarij is the plural of Kharijî – They are those who declared that a Muslim becomes a disbeliever due to commiting a major sin alone.

[8] Translator: Al-Mu‘tazila deem the one who does not agree with their understanding of Tawhîd (7 false principles) is deemed a Mushrik. They believe

that the sinners who are Muslim shall be in a place between Jannah and the Fire. There beliefs are built on false logical deductions that led them to negate many of the Names and Attributes of Allâh. They were the deviant group who opposed Imam Ahlis-Sunnah Ahmed Ibn Hanbal by falsely claiming that the Qur'ân is created and not the Speech of Allâh.

[9] Translator: The Murji'ah believe that sins, major or minor, do not effect faith and that Imân neither increases nor decreases. They claim that actions are not part of faith and that people do not vary in faith.